

4/001

AS SYDNEY
Sea.

4th May, 1967.

(201)

HMAS SYDNEY - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR APRIL, 1967

Sir,

I have the honour to report the proceedings of Her Majesty's Australian ship SYDNEY, under my command, for the month of April, 1967.

Zone Time Kilo (-10)

2. The ship was berthed at Fitting Out Wharf, Garden Island at the beginning of the month.
3. At 1340, Monday 3rd SYDNEY cast off from Fitting Out Wharf and shifted berth to No. 2 buoy to ammunition ship. On completion of ammunitioning at 1655, SYDNEY slipped from the buoy and proceeded to sea. Post refit machinery trials were carried out during the night. The trials proved satisfactory and on Tuesday 4th the ship returned to Fitting Out Wharf finally securing at 0849.
4. Strict security measures were enforced from the time of berthing until departure for Operation RUMBLING ONE, the first voyage to Vietnam this year to relieve 2 Battalions of the Australian Army Force serving in that area.
5. Helicopter landing trials were carried out on Wednesday 5th in preparation for the embarkation of 725 Squadron, SYDNEY Flight later in the week. Loading of Army Unit stores also began on Wednesday and continued throughout the week culminating in the embarkation of 7 RAR troops at 1600 on Friday 7th. Two Sioux helicopters were included in the cargo manifest. A total of 538 Army personnel and 1 RAAF aircrewman took passage to Vietnam.
6. A large number of relatives and friends of Army personnel gathered on the wharf from 1030 on Saturday 8th to bid farewell to the ship. You Sir, called informally at 1120 that forenoon.
7. The ship cast off from the Fitting Out Wharf at 1200 on Saturday 8th and proceeded to sea. HMAS ANZAC left harbour in company to act as consort for the passage to Manus Island.
8. The exercises and drills that were carried out en route are listed in Appendix 'B'. The opportunity was taken to transfer an average number of seven Army personnel to ANZAC daily using the light jackstay. Ship's Company from ANZAC including PNG sailors also visited SYDNEY.
9. During the transit through the Coral Sea it was realised that the Speed/Revolution table for the ship required adjustment. Revolutions for $1\frac{1}{2}$ knots in excess of 'clean bottom' figures were needed to maintain the speed required. The consumption of FFO was similarly affected. The average daily consumption of 250 tons has been attributed to the growth on the hull caused by the long period since the last docking.

Flag Officer Commanding,
HM Australian Fleet (Flag)

(Copy to: The Flag Officer Commanding, HM Australian Fleet.)

114

SECRET

200

10. At 2130 on Tuesday 11th Task Group 327.6 SYDNEY (CTG) and ANZAC, passed through Jomard Passage. USS LONG BEACH was sighted the following forenoon at 1055. I was walking informally through HMAS ANZAC at that time. The usual pleasantries were exchanged with LONG BEACH as she turned to steam with the Task Group. At 1135 LONG BEACH reversed course to continue her passage for Sydney and on departure her speed was plotted as 32 knots.

11. A helicopter winching demonstration was carried out at 054 on Thursday 13th to demonstrate this personnel rescue technique to the Ship's Company and the Army personnel embarked.

12. At 1120 the same day the Task Group entered Seeadler Harbour. ANZAC proceeded to her assigned anchor berth at 1200 and at 1241 SYDNEY anchored 1,500 feet off the shore fuelling installation, completing a Mediterranean moor at 1345.

13. HMAS VAMPIRE was at anchor off Lombrum Point when the Task Group arrived at Manus.

14. The replenishment of the ship with FFO began as a slow operation. To increase the refuelling rate the OFL was also used for refuelling. I have submitted a separate report on this in my letter no. 11.3.0034 dated 17th April, 1967.

15. At 1800 HMAS ANZAC was detached from Task Group 327.6 and HMAS VAMPIRE joined the Group.

16. The Captain HMAS ANZAC called on me at 1525 together with the Captain (D), 10th Destroyer Squadron and the Naval Officer-in-Charge, New Guinea.

17. Refuelling was completed at 2130, 1,560 tons having been received.

18. The stern mooring lines were cast off at 2310 and twelve minutes later HMAS SYDNEY left harbour with VAMPIRE in company. The Task Group proceeded at 19 knots in order to regain the two hours lost due to the extended period required for replenishment.

19. HMA Ships HAWK and GULL were met at 1050 on Friday 14th.

Zone Time India (-9)

20. Exercises carried out during the passage from Manus to Vung Tau are listed in Appendix 'B'. Perfect weather conditions prevailed throughout the passage.

21. Due to SYDNEY's fuel consumption it was not possible to replenish VAMPIRE more than once on passage. This was carried out during the forenoon of Monday 17th. At 1600 that afternoon the Task Group passed through Basilan Strait.

22. A boxing tournament, the Army versus the Navy, was in progress as the ship steamed through the Strait. Three boxers from VAMPIRE were transferred to SYDNEY by light jackstay to participate in the tournament. The Army gained the day with seven wins to the Navy's four.

Zone Time Hotel (-8)

23. The Task Group closed up at Defence Stations at 2000 on Wednesday 19th and remained in this state until 0750 Friday 21st.

199

24. At 0500 on Thursday 20th VAMPIRE was detached to proceed ahead and sweep the approaches to Baie de Ganh Rai and the intended berths. SYDNEY entered harbour at 0630 and at 0700 anchored off Vung Tau. Having anchored, helicopters arrived to land communication equipment and personnel to assist in the control of the disembarkation of Unit Stores, vehicles and 7 RAR troops. A shuttle service of two Chinook helicopters began at 0800 transferring 27 personnel on each flight from the ship to the forward area. The speed at which the troops were landed could not however be compared with the rate of discharge of cargo. Only one 300 ton lighter arrived during the forenoon three hours behind schedule. It was impossible to obtain further lighterage until 1514. Consequently the disembarkation of cargo was not completed until 2300. A fuller report of this has been made by separate letter.

25. VAMPIRE was ordered to proceed to sea at 1900 for departure screen duties. Due to the lighter delay the ship weighed anchor at 2332 and after clearing the harbour set course for Singapore.

26. Swimmer of the Watch/Zodiac trials were conducted on Friday 21st. These trials were carried out in competition with VAMPIRE's seaboat. The trials proved successful. It is not intended to continue these trials until more varied sea states are experienced. So far all trials have been conducted under ideal calm weather conditions. 'Ditched Helicopter' trials were also conducted. VAMPIRE provided a suitable 'home design' airframe which was successfully recovered by sea-plane crane.

Time Zone Golf Hotel (-7½)

27. VAMPIRE was detached at 2359 on Friday 21st to proceed to the Singapore exercise areas for mortar firing calibration.

28. HMAS SYDNEY entered the Johore Strait at 1520 on Saturday 22nd and one hour and forty minutes later secured to 'C' buoy in Dockyard Reach. HMAS VAMPIRE berthed on MULL OF EINTYRE at 1800 the same evening.

29. The Commander, Australian Army Force, Far East Land Forces, Brigadier C. PEARSON, C.B.E., M.C., and The Defence Adviser to the Australian High Commissioner, Captain I.M. BURNSIDE, R.A.N. called soon after our arrival.

30. At 1000 on Monday 23rd I called on the Australian High Commissioner, His Excellency, Mr. A.R. PARSONS. Afterwards I attended luncheon with the Chief of Staff to the Commander Far East Fleet, Rear-Admiral D.H. MASON. At 1800 that evening the Chief Staff Officer (Air) to the Commander Far East Fleet, Captain C.K. ROBERTS, D.S.O., R.N. and Mrs. ROBERTS called on me in SYDNEY. Rear-Admiral D.H. MASON accompanied by Mrs. MASON called informally at 1835.

31. At the invitation of the Australian High Commissioner, I attended the ANZAC Day Dawn Service at the Kranji War Memorial Cemetery on Tuesday 25th as an official representative of the R.A.N. The Captains, HMA Ships VAMPIRE and DUCHESS together with ten of my Officers and fifteen Sailors were in the semi-official party at the Dawn Service. After the service His Excellency Mr. PARSONS accompanied by Captain and Mrs. BURNSIDE joined me for breakfast onboard.

116

148

32. I called on the Flag Officer, Second-in-Command, Far East Fleet, Vice-Admiral C.P. MILLS, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.C. at 1000 in HMS VICTORIOUS. The call was considered returned since Admiral MILLS was shortly to haul down his flag.

33. Later in the forenoon, I called on the Commander, Far East Fleet, Vice-Admiral Sir Frank TWISS, K.C.B., D.S.C. and the Chief of Staff to the Commander, Far East Fleet, Rear-Admiral D.H. MASON. I returned to HMS VICTORIOUS where I was entertained to lunch by the Commanding Officer, Captain I.S. McINTOSH, D.S.O., M.B.E., D.S.C., R.N. At 1445 I received a call by the Captain, HMAS DUCHESS onboard.

34. The Commander, Far East Fleet, returned my call at 0938 on Wednesday 26th and met Heads of Departments on the Quarterdeck.

35. I held a luncheon onboard on Wednesday 26th, my official guests were:

- The Australian High Commissioner - Mr. A.R. PARSONS
- The Minister for Defence and the Interior, Singapore - Mr. TAN TECK KHIM
- The US Naval Attache - Captain GREENWOOD, USN.
- The Defence Adviser to the Australian High Commissioner - Captain I.M. BURNSIDE, RAN.

The Captains, HMA Ships VAMPIRE and DUCHESS also attended.

36. At Singapore an attempt was made to scrape the ship's bottom in order to improve fuel consumption. Divers from the Far East Fleet diving team, our own, and divers from ships present were engaged in this mammoth task. The area scraped was from the waterline to the bilge keel all round, the complete hull from the stern forward for one third of its length, and from the bow aft for one third. This was a remarkable achievement by the divers. At the close of the month the effective improvement in speed for fuel consumed was being assessed.

37. The Flag of Rear-Admiral E.B. ASHMORE, C.B., D.S.C, was hoisted in HMS VICTORIOUS as Flag Officer, Second-in-Command, Far East Fleet at 0800 on Friday 28th. The ship's programme prevented me from arranging to call before departure from the Naval Base.

38. HMAS SYDNEY slipped from the buoy at 0900 on Friday 28th and on passing Loyang beacon VAMPIRE joined from the Singapore exercise areas.

39. The Australian High Commissioner took passage through the Johore Strait at my invitation and on passing Changi at 1030 he was flown off by helicopter to Changi airfield.

Zone Time Hotel (-8)

40. The Task Group closed up at Defence Stations at sunset on Saturday 29th. At 0700, the following morning, both ships anchored in Baie de Ganh Rai. The embarkation of 5 RAR personnel began at 0800. Cargo and unit stores arrived alongside in an LCM at 0730 and by 1400 the entire loading schedule was completed.

41. I entertained to luncheon Major General D. VINCENT, the Commander Australian Forces Vietnam, Major General J.N. EWBANK, USAF, Mr. H.A. DUNN, Counsellor, Australian Embassy, Saigon and four senior Service officers while loading was in progress.

117

(197)

42. At 1400 VAMPIRE left harbour to conduct departure screen duties prior to SYDNEY leaving harbour. Two helicopters were provided to assist VAMPIRE. The ship weighed anchor at 1500 and proceeded for Manus Island, and as the month ended SYDNEY, with VAMPIRE in company, was closed up at Defence Stations steaming Southward across the South China Sea.

AIR

43. 725 Squadron, SYDNEY Flight, has found no difficulty in operating from the ship. Aircraft maintenance and the availability of the helicopters embarked has been of a high standard. The following points are of interest:

- (a) Monthly flying hours 725 Squadron - 82 hours
- (b) Total number of landings - 60
- (c) Total number of take-offs - 56

It will be a matter of regret to the ship when the time arrives for 725 Squadron to disembark.

TECHNICAL

44. (a) Engineering

The main and auxiliary machinery has performed satisfactorily throughout the month. Steam has been on the main engines for a total of twenty days.

(b) Electrical

There have been no serious weapon or electrical defects during April.

TRAINING

45. 102 Ordinary sailors were borne during the month. Training has progressed satisfactorily notwithstanding that the ship has been operating in her primary role.

SECURITY

46. On 3rd April, I addressed the Ship's Company on all aspects of security in accordance with your AF Memorandum F.S. 14/67.

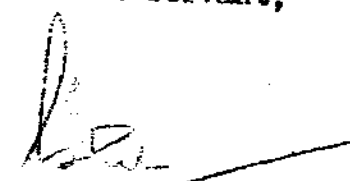
HEALTH AND WELFARE

47. The health and morale of the Ship's Company remains good. The conduct of libertymen ashore was most satisfactory. Navy Office approval to advance the Ship's Company one week's pay before arrival at Singapore was much appreciated. The Welfare Committee has met during the month.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,


(E. J. PEELL)
CAPTAIN

118